Isbister School
Winnipeg

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Isbister School
Winnipeg

Introduction

Manitoba's most valuable resource has always been its children, and it has been the provincial educational system which has prepared these children for their future lives and careers. The designation in 1984, of the Winnipeg Adult Education Centre, formerly known as Isbister School, represents more than just the preservation of a brick and stone shell—it commemorates the conscious efforts of Manitobans, past and present, to make this province a better place in which to live, work and play.

For over a century, Winnipeg, as Manitoba's capital has been the educational pacesetter for its political and economic hinterland. It was also important because of its gregarious physical size when viewed in relation to its smaller counterparts throughout Manitoba and Western Canada. A great part of this stature was derived from education, and the people of the West looked to Winnipeg as their model. In this perspective, it is easy to see why the city had the biggest and best facilities from an early date.

The Winnipeg Adult Education Centre, 310 Vaughan Street, a fine representative of the city's educational excellence, was erected during 1898-99 as the Isbister School and was named for early educator, Alexander Kennedy Isbister. It was designed by Samuel Hooper who later became Manitoba's first Provincial Architect, while the builders were Sutherland and Wood, the latter one of Winnipeg's prominent contractors.

The three storey brick edifice, with attic and basement, is in the Queen Anne style of architecture. It initially housed ten classrooms, a basement playroom and an assembly hall, though that latter space was subsequently converted into two additional classrooms. In its day, Isbister was a model school, and served as a pattern for similar structures erected to 1906 in Winnipeg. Isbister is now the oldest surviving public school in the City of Winnipeg. Of its contemporaries, only two others, Pinkham and Somerset, survive in Winnipeg.

The school has been well-maintained in its eighty-five years of existence. This high level of maintenance has led to a low rate of repair, and consequently, the building still bears many of its now rare, original interior components in the form of stairways, metal ceilings, stained glass windows and wainscotting.

History of Manitoba Schools

Knowledge has always been passed down from one generation to the next, but there was no attempt at formal education, in what is today Manitoba, until after the arrival of the Selkirk Settlers in 1812. The first educational facilitites were set up by Lord Selkirk in St. Boniface in 1818 to provide for the tutelage of the Catholic residents in his colony. Protestant schools, for the fewer Scottish colonists, followed two years later. At the time, the education of the youth of the settlement was under the aegis of the Protestant and Catholic churches, and were basically parochial institutions. As settlement began to spread through the Northwest, the missionaries of

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Winnipeg's First Public School, 1871, Maple and Henry Streets.

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Nisbet Hall, Scotia Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1865.

these religious groups established local churches, to which were generally attached schools. The function of teacher was at the time undertaken by the parish priest or pastor. The school buildings themselves were often rude log structures, though others, such as Nisbet Hall at Kildonan (1865) were more substantial stone edifices.

After Manitoba's entry into Confederation in 1870, the province was organized into twenty-four school districts and the nature of education became more formalized. By 1875 much of the new province was divided into these small educational units. The school buildings that served the pioneer areas were, like the early parochial schools, small and poorly equipped. However, in the few large urban centres, such as Winnipeg, Portage la Prairie or Brandon, schools tended to be somewhat larger. A good example of an early large urban school was the 1882 Brandon Central School. This was a commodious two storey structure with gable roof and Gothic styling.

The school system was stream-lined in 1890, when a new Schools Act was passed. This Act placed education directly under the influence of the Provincial Government and eliminated funding to parochial schools. Many of the former denominational schools came to be used as secular facilities. The combination of the two original school populations, Catholic and Protestant, into what had been a facility for one denomination brought about an eventual obsolescence in size of many early buildings.

The public educational history of Winnipeg, specifically, began in the autumn of 1871, when William Fisher Luxton, funded with a provincial grant, opened a log school at the corner of Maple and Henry Streets. Commencing

L.A. & M.M. Stuckey

Public School, Tenth Street, Brandon, Manitoba, 1882.

with an attendance of only twenty pupils, the growth of the Winnipeg School District, established in 1871, became a mirror of the city's own progress. In 1875, a frame school building was erected on Notre Dame Avenue at Garry Street; two years later a pair of more substantial brick-veneer structures were built on Ellen Street and Maria (now King) Street to accommodate Winnipeg's growing student population. During the great land and population boom of the early 1880s, when the population tripled to 24,000, these earlier structures were either enlarged or augmented by additional buildings in newer parts of the city. With a post-boom recession, the growth rate of Winnipeg's population slowed somewhat, but by the early 'nineties, larger brick schools began to replace the wooden facilities of the early 1880s.

Originally, Winnipeg was divided into four educational wards. The North Ward comprised the area west of Main Street and north of William; the East Ward fell east of Main Street; and the West Ward took in everything west of Main, north of Notre Dame Avenue and south of William. Each of these three wards had their own school. The fourth ward, the South Ward, located west of Main Street and south of Notre Dame, was without its own facility until 1880, when a large two-storey brick-veneer school was designed by the leading Winnipeg architect of the time, Charles A. Barber. This structure was subsequently built on the south side of Graham, between Hargrave and Carlton. It was a handsome structure in Italianate design, with low roof and magnificent cupola. The South Ward School would later be renamed the South-Central and then the Carlton School, and be demolished in 1903 for a larger edifice, but in the 1880s and during the

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South Ward School (later Ward 2 or Carlton School), south side Graham Avenue, between Hargrave and Carlton Streets, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1880. Charles Arnold Barber, architect.

greater part of the 'nineties, it served most of the school population of the South Ward. Enlarged some years later, and augmented by the Mulvey (1893), Pembina (1883) and Fort Rouge (1891) schools, the South Central held its own until the late 1890s when it had become hopelessly crowded. It became obvious that an additional facility was required.

Isbister School

The development of the residential area west of Hargrave Street and north of Portage Avenue in the late 1880s and 1890s ensured the presence of a burgeoning school population in the South Ward by the late 'nineties. The firey destruction of Pembina School in March 1897, did nothing to ease the overcrowding in the South Ward, which was then known as Ward 2. Early in 1898, the School Board made the decision to build four new schools—a large brick building to replace the Pembina facility, which would later be called Gladstone School; a small wooden structure in Ward 3 at the corner of Wellington and Beverly, known as Wellington School; a large brick Ward 6 School at Mountain and Charles, known as Machray; and a Ward 2 school (Isbister), projected for a then unpurchased site. Initially, an eight room school was slated for Ward 2, though growth forecasts later altered this size to ten rooms with an assembly hall. During late April, 1898, a site selection was made on the northern part of the Hudson's Bay Reserve, a large block of unoccupied land, owned by the Hudson's Bay Company and strategically situated between the Red River and Colony Creek, extending south from Notre Dame to the Assiniboine River. On 14 June 1898, a contract was let to the building firm of Sutherland and Wood for the erection of a $29,336 school to be placed on the northern half of this site according to the plans of architect Samuel Hooper.

Work on the Vaughan Street school began during the third week of June 1898. Although Hooper had suggested the name "Strathcona", in honour of Lord Strathcona, for the new structure, the name of Alexander Kennedy Isbister (1822-1883), the eminent Northwest scholar and educator was chosen for the new building in early July. Work continued and was far enough progressed for the cornerstone laying ceremony to take place on 26 September 1898. Building Committee Chairman Angus Browne performed the ceremony, though Joseph Carman, the School Board Chairman made the stirring speech of the day. After extolling the virtues of the new edifice, it was Carman's pleasure to declare that

> the walls that you see rising before you are an expression of the universal desire of our citizens to give their children who will succeed them such a training as will enable them to carry on worthily the work of nation building which their fathers have so well begun.

With the official functions ended, work recommenced on the school. By early November, the brickwork was nearly up to the top of the third storey. An anxious building committee voted in favour of rushing the construction in order to erect the roof before the arrival of the extreme cold of winter. This was done partially to protect the foundations from freezing, as well as to complete the building and alleviate the over-crowding at Carlton School.

Indeed, contractor Sutherland stated that he was prepared to lay shingles at -20°F (-29°C) in order to close in the building. So fast did this proceed that the Smead-Dowd Heating System was first fired up on 5 January 1899 to provide warmth for the plastering of the structure. C.W. Sharp (1851-1924), the prominent plastering contractor, handled this phase of the work. Though slightly behind schedule, the new Isbister School was opened for business on 27 March 1899. No ceremony attended this event.

Once opened, Isbister became a fixture in the city, notable among the city's educational facilities. A special feature of the school was its mouth organ band which apparently impressed Sir H.G.L. Joly, the Lieutenant-Governor of British Columbia so much, that he donated a drum for the accompaniment of the harmonicas! Another highlight of the structure, circular iron fire escapes, were installed at the north and south sides of the school in 1907-08. These proved to be more popular with the students than anything found on the playground. The youngsters often anticipated the thrill of fire drills by using these circular slides. More importantly, of course, the fire escapes enabled the school to be cleared in less than two minutes. The slides have since been replaced by more modern units. These physical attributes aside, the school was also able to turn out its share of leading citizens, including Skuli Johnson, one of Manitoba's first Rhodes scholars, Claude Heubach, a prominent businessman, Gordon Stovel, a successful local printer and many others.

During August 1909, Isbister and its sister schools, Carlton and Alexandra, were in constant use for meetings of the British Association for the Advancement of Science while on their Winnipeg convention. By 1939 lip-reading classes for the deaf were conducted there, and it is obvious that the school population of Isbister had begun to decline in size, as these special classes denote that the pressure for full occupancy was no longer present. In September 1967, Isbister became the Winnipeg Adult Education Centre, a facility which provides high school education for mature students. Eleven years after its opening, overcrowding prompted the erection of portable buildings in front of and attached to the Vaughan Street facade.

Three Important Figures Associated With Isbister School

There were three individuals of extraordinary background who figured largely in the educational history of Manitoba and specifically in the building of Isbister School. The architect and the builder of the school, Samuel Hooper and Daniel David Wood, successful representatives of their respective professions, were heavily involved in Manitoba school construction at the turn of the century. Alexander Kennedy Isbister, who died fifteen years before the construction of Isbister School, exemplified the pursuit of knowledge in the province, and it was fitting that the name of the new facility would honour this early Manitoban.

Samuel Hooper (1851-1911)

Samuel Hooper (1851-1911) was born at Hatherleigh, Devonshire, England, the son of John and Susannah Hooper. At an early age, he studied architecture in his uncle's office, but came to Canada in 1869. Settling at London, Ontario, Hooper followed the occupation of stone carver. Though

he returned to England in 1878, he was back in Canada two years later, with his three brothers and four sisters, this time to stay.

Initially, Hooper went to Emerson and in 1881 came to Winnipeg, where he went into partnership with David Ede, then the leading monument maker of the city. In 1883, Ede retired from the partnership, leaving Hooper to practice on his own account. During the next decade, the works of the Hooper Marble Works were truly monumental, including (with many fine tombstones) the Volunteer Monument, the Norquay Memorial and the Seven Oaks Monument.

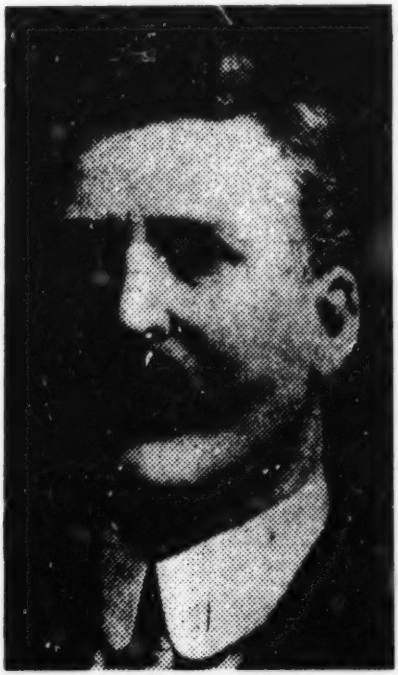
During 1895, once the marble business had become firmly established, Hooper began to practice architecture. His first big Winnipeg commission appears to have been the renovation of St. Mary's Church, St. Mary's Avenue, where a completely new facade and towers were added to the structure. There soon followed more work which included the Nicholas Bawlf Residence (1897; demolished), the Exchange Building (1898), Isbister School (1898), the Land Titles Building (1903), St. Mary's School (1903-04; demolished) and the Winnipeg Carnegie Library (1903) on William Avenue. The crowning achievement of Hooper's career came on 6 June 1904 when he was appointed Manitoba's Provincial Architect, the first position of this type in Western Canada. In this capacity, he had charge over all new provincial government buildings. These included the Agricultural Colleges at Tuxedo and Fort Garry, the Winnipeg Normal School, as well as the court houses at Morden and Brandon. Samuel Hooper died at the height of his profession while on a trip to England. His body was returned to Winnipeg and interred at St. John's Cemetery amid appropriate Masonic ceremonies.

Legislative Library of Manitoba.

Samuel Hooper, Architect—1851-1911

Daniel David Wood (1859-1925)

One of the contractors of Isbister School, Daniel David Wood, was born in Bilston, Staffordshire, England, and came to Brantford, Ontario, with his parents in 1870. He was subsequently employed by the Grand Trunk Railway on bridge construction for a number of years, becoming a contractor in his own right at Seaforth, Ontario, in 1878. Moving to Winnipeg in 1882, he entered into the building trades, but became a locomotive engineer for the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Northern Pacific Railway between the years 1883 and 1885. After delivering the first contingent of Northwest Rebellion troops into Saskatchewan, he retired from the railway and began a long and notable career as a builder. He was responsible, with his partner, A.C. Sutherland, of whom little is known, for the construction of a number of schools, including the Somerset (1901), Isbister, Norquay (1892; demolished), Gladstone (1898; demolished) and Wellington (1905; demolished) buildings. He also erected the Stovel (1893), Davis (1895; demolished) and Commercial Travellers (1906-07) Buildings, as well as the first Bank of Commerce (1900; demolished), the Bank of Hamilton (1897; demolished) and the Court House (1894-5; demolished).



Manitoba Free Press 31 December 1925, p.1.

Daniel David Wood, Builder—1859-1925

After 1900, Wood diversified his operations into the supply of coal and wood, a partnership in the Alsip Brick and Tile Company, and through the operation of various quarries at Stony Mountain. Wood also served as a member of Winnipeg City Council and the Board of Trade for many years, and was, in part, responsible for the paving of Winnipeg's streets with asphalt. At the time of his death on 30 December 1925, he was a very highly-regarded member of the Winnipeg business community.

Alexander Kennedy Isbister (1822-1883)

A.K. Isbister was born at Cumberland House on the Saskatchewan River, the son of Thomas Isbister and Mary Kennedy, of Orkney and Cree descent, respectively. Mrs. Isbister was an older sister of Captain William Kennedy, the Arctic explorer from St. Andrews. Alexander's first formal education was received at a school in the Orkneys, and after 1833, he attended the Anglican Red River Academy, in what is now Winnipeg. The Academy was operated by Reverend David Jones and later by John Macallum. There, the young Isbister was considered an outstanding student, having shown a "bookish" inclination from an early age.

At sixteen, Isbister became an articled clerk of the Hudson's Bay Company in the Mackenzie District of present-day Saskatchewan. By 1841, however, he had resigned from his post, and journeyed to Great Britain to further his education. There, he obtained his Master of Arts degree through Kings College, Aberdeen, and Edinburgh University. He was awarded an

Manitoba Archives

Alexander Kennedy Isbister—1822-1883

LL.B. degree after studying at the University of London. He embarked upon a teaching career which spanned the 1850s, during which time he held the important position of Dean of the College of Preceptors, the examining board which licenced British Teachers, while he was also the editor of *The Educational Times*, the organ of that college

Isbister began to study law in 1864, and was called to the Middle Temple in England two years later. He never practiced as a lawyer, but preferred to continue his educational role, writing some twenty-one text books on many topics prior to his death on 28 May 1883.

Isbister is chiefly remembered as one of the main promoters of Red River and the Northwest during his lifetime. Though he did not see the settlement after 1841, he kept in constant touch with the Northwest via publications and memberships in various societies. Furthermore, the bulk of his $80,000 estate and 5,000 volume library were bequested to the fledgling University of Manitoba. The money was established as a scholarship trust for students of both sexes, without any distinction of race, creed or nationality. Thus, between 1894 and 1917, some $103,456 was distributed as Isbister Scholarships to Manitobans and other Western Canadians. Though the Isbister Fund was exhausted in 1934, the Government of Manitoba has carried on the grants to the present time.

Winnipeg Public School Board, *Annual Report for 1898*

Isbister School, 310 Vaughan Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1898-99. Samuel Hooper, architect.

The Architecture of Isbister School

The building which greeted the first pupils was a handsome sand-brick structure, three storeys in height with a large basement and attic that has remained largely intact until the present time. This school was of the Queen Anne style of architecture. This popular architectural style was characterized by a irregularity in both elevation and plan and by a variety of colour and texture in building materials. The almost Chinese pagoda tower roof was one element of that very eclectic architecture in which many types of elements were blended together in very distinctive buildings. During the late 1880s and 1890s, the Queen Anne was the typical style found among many public and private buildings.

In size, the school measured 75 × 81 feet (22.7 × 24.7 m) and was surmounted by a truncated hip roof with wrought iron cresting and bearing a convex-mansard roofed tower with small round hooded windows. The tower was crowned by a fine cupola with a flagpole on top. Below, the brick walls were complemented by limestone trim with bands of lighter sandstone added for effect in the high foundations. On the north and south sides, small bays projected from the building. These housed the supply rooms of the ten school rooms. Large gables on the east and west facades enlarged the accompanying attic space.

To reach the inside, one ventured up a number of steps on the Vaughan Street facade, past two large stone columns, thereby gaining the front porch of the building. Once through the double doors, one stood within a large reception hall, which in turn gave entry to the main foyer. At the east and west ends of the central hallway were two handsome oak stairways, each rising to the third floor. Wainscotting composed of V-joint boarding decorated this foyer, and was complemented by the block and column trim found around every doorway. Sheet metal of various pressed designs produced an attractive ceiling. Lit by the electric light and presided over by a painting of A.K. Isbister, the school appeared as a formidable hall of learning.

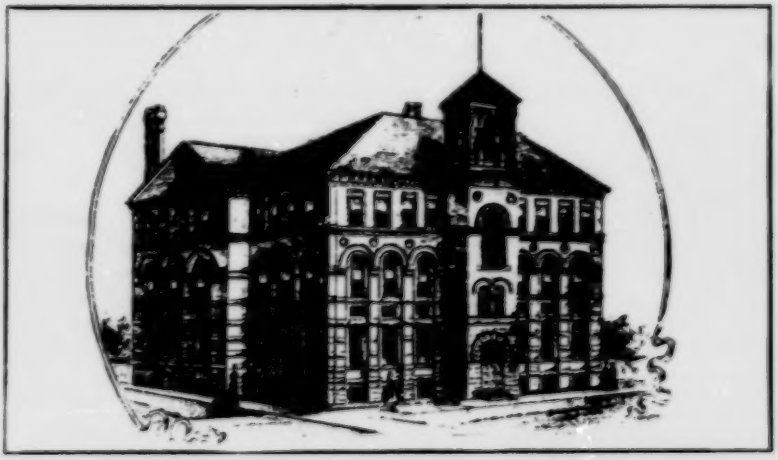
On that first storey, opening off the hallway, were four large and well-illuminated classrooms, each in excess of 24 × 32 feet (7.3 × 9.8 m), with sheet metal ceilings. Cloak rooms were found in each room—these apparently had solid walls 8 or 9 feet (2.4-2.7 m) high with twin entrances. Along the classroom walls were blackboards and wainscotting similar to that in the foyer. Maple floors carried the tread of many small feet, while the Andrews Adjustable Desk was the mainstay of the school, being affixed to those same floors. Coloured glass transom panels of magenta and blue added a bit of festivity to the rooms. Classrooms on the second and third floors and a third floor assembly room were similarly appointed. The many fine touches in the building were considered significant, for, as the 1899 *Annual Report by the Winnipeg Public School Board* commented

> The character of the finishing, the pleasant effect of the colouring in the furniture, walls and ceilings has an important value as one of the educational influences by which the children are affected. With no museums or picture galleries or other agencies for the cultivation of

> taste and promotion of art amongst us, it is important that the school should not fail in its duty in this respect, for no educational agencies have greater claims on the ground of utility alone than those concerned with the education of taste. There is no article of commerce, however humble, that is not increased in value by the exertion of taste in its production, and no situation in life that is not refined and ennobled by tasteful surroundings.

In further justification of all these new features, omitted in previous school designs, it was reported that "the opening of the Isbister School.....gave much needed relief of work in the lower grades....." Indeed, when the Honourable G.W. Ross, Minister of Education for Ontario, visited Winnipeg during June 1899, Isbister was one of the "showpieces" he visited. In many ways, Isbister became the prototype of later schools. Though Norquay School (1892) had introduced the three storey, hipped roof school to Winnipeg, the type had only seen an example in Mulvey School (1893, 1895; demolished) had not been copied in the Aberdeen (1893; demolished) or the Argyle-Dufferin (1895; demolished) buildings, which reverted back to traditional two storey, hipped roof predecessors exemplified by Fort Rouge School (1891) and the Collegiate Institute (1891; demolished).

Clearly, with its well-lit and well ventilated spaces, Isbister was a break with its past, as was the case with Gladstone which was built according to similar principles. In the six years after 1899, the School Board erected the Somerset (1901), Pickham (1902), Alexandra (1902-3; demolished), Carlton (1903-04; demolished), and Strathcona (1904; demolished) Schools which were in many ways copies of Isbister. Like Isbister, they had



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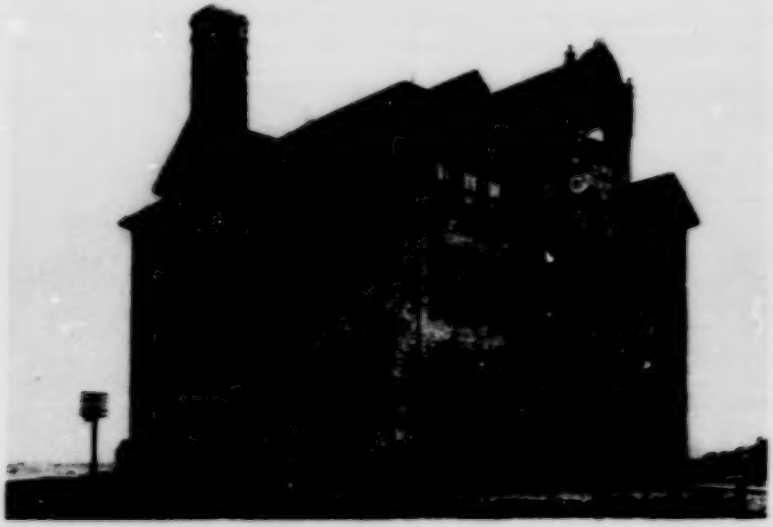
North Central (later Norquay) School, Euclid Avenue at Lusted Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba. 1892. George Browne, architect. Demolished, c. 1956.

square, boxy massing, truncated hipped roofs, tower entrances, and were three storeys in height. In each case, however, details such as towers and window types varied. These later schools were designed by John Bertram Mitchell (1852-1945). Mitchell, who had been Inspector of Buildings for the School Board, was placed in charge of the Board's architecture branch in 1900. It is clear that he perceived the Hooper design for Isbister as a prototype and followed that successful example, only altering details to lend individuality to what were otherwise look-alike buildings. Hooper himself appears to have reused the basic Isbister plan in his designs for St. Mary's School (1903-04; demolished) and Ecole Provencher (1906-07).

After 1905, the construction of the Isbister-type schools ended with the erection of John M. King School. There, according to the 1905 *Annual Report of the Winnipeg Public School Board*,

> the plans showed a considerable departure in the exterior from former buildings: outer walls run higher than the roof, which is not seen, but the parapet with cut stone posts and coping gives the effect of sufficient height; stone vestibules give entrace to each basement from the exterior, a new feature, while the balcony over the front entrance, supported upon stone columns, and ornamented by a turned stone balustrade, gives a pleasing finish to the whole.

Though the Isbister-style roof vanished in favour of the cheaper flat-top, the building retained the old box-like massing of the earlier structures.



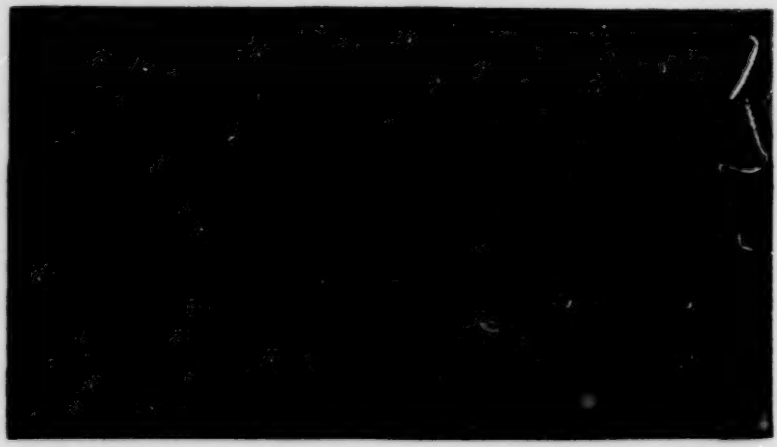
Legislative Library of Manitoba

Strathcona School, NW-MacGregor Street at Burrows Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1904. J.B. Mitchell, architect. Demolished, 1963-64.

Manitoba Archives.

St. Mary's School (left) and St. Mary's Church (right), St. Mary's Avenue at Hargrave, Winnipeg, Manitoba. (1903-04, left; 1896, right). Both Samuel Hooper. Destroyed by fire 28 November 1969, ruins demolished, 1971.

This was also seen in the 1906 Wellington School. After 1907, when Luxton School was built, this vertical type of massing vanished, as schools went back to a two storey format, thereby eliminating what was considered, in fires, to be the dangerous third storey rooms. This widespread massing was evident in the King Edward School of 1908.



Manitoba Archives.

King Edward School No. 1 NE-Selkirk Avenue and Sinclair Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 1908. J.B. Mitchell, architect. Demolished, 1975.

What eventually doomed many old schools in Winnipeg, including fourteen like Isbister, was the widespread belief, by 1950, that they were simply too old and poorly designed for the needs of modern education. Fires in three of the old schools provoked public fears and when a study, completed in 1947 by Dr. William C. Reavis of the University of Chicago, stated that "it is not good public policy for a modern city to house its school children in outmoded school buildings" the fate of Winnipeg's older schools was cast in doubt. Indeed, Reavis ominously suggested that "fourteen building should either be razed or rebuilt....." Among this number suggested for demolition was Isbister. While most of the other schools recommended for demolition eventually did fall, beginning with Fort Rouge (1891) in 1954, three schools, including Isbister, have eluded the wrecker's ball and today remain as testimony to the variety of functions that these kinds of buildings can still fulfill.

Significance

Isbister School is the oldest public school still extant within the City of Winnipeg and is one of the oldest in the province. The attrition brought on by changing educational needs has taken its toll, leaving only Pinkham and Somerset schools, besides Isbister, to recall the city's nineteen early school buildings. Structures such as Isbister served as the prototypes for schools across Manitoba—Winnipeg, as the leading centre, also became the innovator in things architectural. In the ensuing years after 1898, many schools of this general type were erected in the more affluent centres of Manitoba. Indeed, in a 1903 publication showing school house plans, Isbister was given as a model of a larger facility.

Isbister School is in the Queen Anne style of architecture. The unusual tower roof, pilasters and ornamental brickwork were elements of that very eclectic architecture, where many forms were blended together to produce distinctive buildings. Throughout Winnipeg, these Queen Anne style schools were stately representatives of the importance education was accorded by its citizens. Even when it was only one of many, Isbister was notable among these as a fine piece of architecture. Now that only two others of its kind are left, its significance is all the greater.

While its remaining contemporaries, Pinkham and Somerset, have succumbed to changing needs and are much altered, Isbister, representing school buildings from the turn of the century, is remarkably intact. Rare, original interior components such as the stairs, wainscotting, tin ceilings and stained glass are still in evidence to display to the present generation the delights of a late Victorian school. The building is now well-maintained and remains as a fitting survivor of the type in Winnipeg, adding its unique identity to the area streetscape. The designation of this building, and its continued use, ensure that it will continue to occupy a prominent place in the community's, and the province's, educational heritage.

Bibliography for Further Reading

The most informative sources for information on the Winnipeg school systems are, of course, the *Annual Reports of the Winnipeg Schools Board*

(later *Winnipeg School Division No. 1*) from 1880 to the present. Information on the system is also to be found in W.G. Pearce, *Winnipeg School Days, 1871-1950*, a mimeographed account found in the Legislative Library of Manitoba. The downfall of the Isbister-type schools was first mooted in William C. Reavis *Report of the Directed Self-Survey of Winnipeg Public Schools, September, 1948* (2 volumes). Much specific information on the schools is to be found in the endnotes to a report on file with the Historic Resources Branch, by R.R. Rostecki, *Winnipeg Adult Education Centre* (Isbister School), March 1982, file 3.E.14.

More data on A.K. Isbister is to be found in H.C. Knox, "Alexander Kennedy Isbister", in *Papers Read Before the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba*, Series III, No. 12 (Winnipeg: n.p. 1957). An earlier account of the career of Isbister is found in George Bryce, "In Memoriam: Late A.K. Isbister, M.A., LL.B.", Manitoba Historical and Scientific Society, *Transaction No. 8, Season 1883-1884* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Daily Free Press, 1883).

Credits

The cover photograph is provided courtesy of the Manitoba Archives.

Isbister School

The oldest surviving public school building in Winnipeg, Isbister School was built during the fall and winter of 1898-99 to plans by Samuel Hooper, Provincial Architect of Manitoba from 1904 to 1911. Named for Alexander Kennedy Isbister (1822-1883), the eminent scholar and educator of Scottish and Cree parentage, it was used as a model for a number of Winnipeg schools built after the turn of the century.

With its picturesque roof line, varied surfaces, round and square-headed windows, columns, pilasters and tower loggia, it incorporates elements from various styles including Romanesque and Queen Anne Revival. In short, it is a fine example of the late Victorian fashion for architectural eclecticism.

The Historic Sites Advisory Board of Manitoba